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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/691,746	10/22/2003	Dimitry Shur	8640	1979

7590 07/31/2006

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EXAMINER
JOHNSTON, PHILLIP A

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
2881	

DATE MAILED: 07/31/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	10/691,746	SHUR ET AL.	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	Phillip A. Johnston	2881	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 22 October 2003.
- 2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.
- 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) Claim(s) 1-18 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) Claim(s) 1-18 is/are rejected.
- 7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) The drawing(s) filed on 22 October 2003 is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) All b) Some * c) None of:
1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____. | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____. |

Detailed Action

Claims Rejection - 35 U.S. C. 102

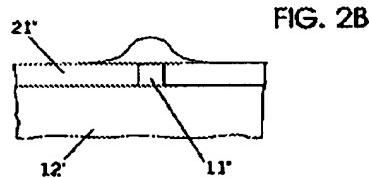
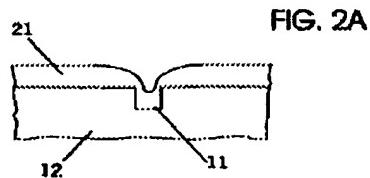
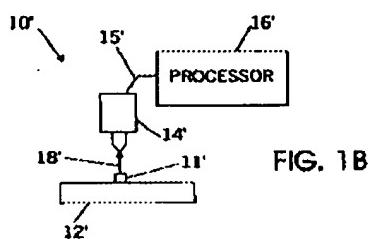
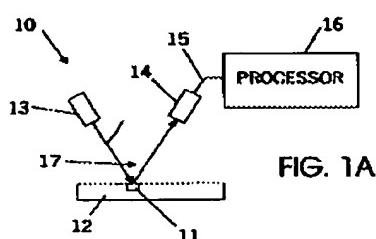
1. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

2. Claims 1,3,4,6,8,9,15 and 17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102 (b) as being clearly anticipated by Chen, U.S. Patent No. 6, 064,486.

Chen (486) discloses the following;

(a) Determining overlay error by detecting the position of an alignment mark 11 or 11' on substrate 12 or 12', by imaging the substrate including the alignment mark when directing an electron beam from radiation source 13 and producing an alignment signal 15 or 15'. The signal is produced when scattered radiation from the layers are detected by detector 14 or 14' and processed in processor 16 or 16', as recited in claims 1,3,4,6,9, and 15. See Column 5, line 3-55; and Figures 1A -2B below;



(b) The second feature 11 or 11' affecting the shape of the area 21 or 21' on first layer, as recited in claims 1,8, and 17. See Column 5, line 62-67; Column 6, line 1-8; and Figures 2A and 2B above.

Claims Rejection – 35 U.S.C. 103

3. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which the subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

4. Claims 1-18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,064,486 to Chen, and Hiroi, U.S. Patent No. 6,172,365, in view of Sawahata, U.S. Patent No. 6,501,077.

Chen (486) as described above discloses all the limitations of claims 1-18 but fails to teach the use of preliminary charging the second feature, as recited in claims 5 and 10. However, Hiroi (365) discloses pre-charging the sample surface to improve image resolution in an electron beam inspection apparatus. See Column 13, line 26-56.

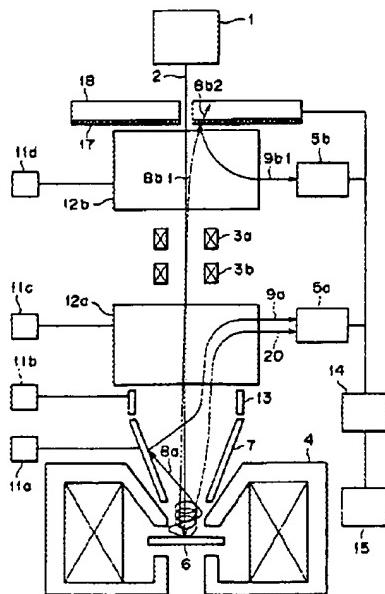
Therefore it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art that the overlay error detection apparatus and method of Chen (486) can be modified to use the pre-charge method of Hiroi (365), to provide an electron beam inspection method,

and apparatus, for reducing the charge-up phenomenon and obtaining a high-contrast signal representing a physical property by using secondary electrons or back-scattered electrons obtained from the object.

The combination of Chen (486) and Hiroi (365) fails to teach the detection of electrons reflected or scattered at small angles, as recited in claims 2,7,11-14, 16 and 18.

However, Sawahata (077) discloses detecting reflected electron 8a generated at a low angle from the sample, using detector 5a. See Column 4, line 33-47; and Figure 1 below.

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Therefore it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art that the overlay error detection apparatus and method of Chen (486) and Hiroi (365) can be modified to use the detection of low angle reflected electrons in accordance with Sawahata (077) to provide a scanning electron microscope where reflective

Conclusion

5. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications should be directed to Phillip Johnston whose telephone number is (571) 272-2475. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday from 7:30 am to 4:00 pm. If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiners supervisor John Lee can be reached at (571) 272-2477. The fax phone number for the organization where the application or proceeding is assigned is 571 273 8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

PJ

July 20, 2006


NIKITA WELLS
PRIMARY EXAMINER

07/24/06